



Association of Bay Area Governments
Bay Area Air Quality Management District
Metropolitan Transportation Commission

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Joint Policy Committee/Regional Planning Program

Date: January 10, 2006
To: Joint Policy Committee
From: Regional Planning Program Director
Subject: JPC Climate Change Study

At its meeting of November 17th, 2006, the Joint Policy Committee (JPC) accepted a request from the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) to study the issue of climate change and recommend a set of appropriate actions for regional agencies to take on the issue. The JPC also approved a set of initial study parameters to guide its work. Foremost among these is a commitment to have a final report completed in May.

This memo introduces some initial work which regional staff has been taking on the JPC's behalf. This work is presented for information and discussion. No Committee action is required at this time.

Public Workshop

The parameters for the JPC climate change study include a public and stakeholder workshop early in 2007 to solicit and discuss suggestions for appropriate regional action. This workshop has now been scheduled as follows:

February 16, 2007
9:00 A.M. to Noon
MetroCenter Auditorium
101 Eighth Street, Oakland

The workshop will be announced via news release and advertised on agency websites. Relevant stakeholder groups and other interested and expert parties will be individually invited to attend. This will not be a formal meeting of the JPC, and JPC member attendance is optional. However, members of the JPC and of other regional committees, councils and boards are encouraged to participate, either actively or as observers. The workshop proceedings will be reported to the JPC in March.

Transportation Measures

Fifty percent of Bay Area greenhouse gas emissions are attributable to transportation sources. Chris Briddle, former MTC planning director, and Bruce Riordan, consultant to MTC and the Air District, have been doing some initial exploration of possible initiatives which the region

could take to reduce emissions from transportation sources. Mr. Riordan will present their preliminary findings at the January 19th JPC meeting.

Elements of a Regional Strategy

As part of its Climate Summit on November 10th, the Air District convened breakout sessions to share initial ideas for addressing climate change in the Bay Area. Participants self-selected into four groups: business, government, non-governmental organizations, and transportation, and they suggested a panoply of interesting and useful ideas. Staff has reviewed the suggestions made during all four sessions and grouped them into general themes, reported below. These may constitute the rudimentary elements of a regional strategy, but are presented only for information and discussion at this time.

Many of the suggestions made at the Summit are not directed at, or appropriate to, regional agencies. Participants were not asked to identify only regional actions. Some suggestions conflict with other suggestions. This is to be expected at the beginning of a process. A few suggestions seem to be derived from a general environmental ethic and may only be tangentially related to climate change.

In general, expectations for regional action are surprisingly modest. This may be an implicit recognition of the limited powers accorded the region. More worrisome: it may be indicative of our collective incapacity to fully appreciate the magnitude of the climate-change issue or the ambitiousness of the state climate-change targets. There seems to be tendency to recommend what we are already doing—just more of it. While not exactly “business as usual,” this continuing marginal improvement approach, even if accelerated, may be inadequate to the very big challenges ahead. Smart growth, for example, will help in the long term but is unlikely to produce enough change soon enough to make a significant difference relative to the state’s 2020 target. More fundamental alterations in what we do and how we do it may be required.

Principal themes, without regard to organizational or institutional responsibility and without any attempt to evaluate or rank, are as follows:

- Transportation and land-use: planning and investment

Including, for example:

- Encouraging more smart-growth (infill, TOD, jobs/housing balance, centered development);
- Discouraging development and transportation investments in areas subject to sea-level rise;
- Connecting transportation funding directly to smart-growth initiatives;
- Encouraging energy conserving housing developments and buildings;
- Encouraging more office development in transit-accessible locations;
- Locating context-setting and highly symbolic public facilities (e.g., sports stadiums) with greater regard to multi-modal accessibility;
- Developing stronger public transit, biking and walking systems;
- Providing more free shuttles, particularly in downtown areas;
- Expanding carpool lanes;

- Giving greater priority to non-automobile modes in the regional transportation plan;
 - Implementing “complete streets” supporting all travel modes;
 - Canceling highway widening projects;
 - Developing a regional rail plan;
 - Supporting inter-regional high-speed rail;
 - Integrating rail and bus networks;
 - Encouraging safe routes to schools;
 - Increasing car share availability;
 - Expanding bus rapid transit;
 - Encouraging more transportation demand management (TDM) including telecommuting and employer trip reduction ordinances;
 - Facilitating more ride sharing.
- Information sharing, networking, and technical assistance
Including, for example:
 - Maintaining and publishing an inventory or clearinghouse of contacts, relevant information, current initiatives and best practices;
 - Holding forums to share information and provide opportunities for peer-to-peer networking on climate-change issues;
 - Providing metrics and models to assess climate-change effects and initiatives;
 - Developing a greenhouse-gas-reduction toolkit;
 - Providing regional indicators of climate progress;
 - Funding itinerate experts to assist greenhouse-gas reduction programs;
 - Automating access to utility baseline data;
 - Standardizing and streamlining emissions inventory and audit processes;
 - Providing information to assist environmentally friendly procurement;
 - Joining national networks of cities and regions working on climate change initiatives.
- Alternative technologies, energy sources, and fuels
Including, for example:
 - Exploring “community choice aggregation” utility models;
 - Supporting renewable energy;
 - Encouraging plug-in hybrids and other fuel-efficient vehicles;
 - Accelerating implementation of cleaner fuels (e.g., biodiesel)
 - Using landfill methane to power trucks and buses;
 - Supporting AB 1493 (Pavley) type rules for freight vehicles;
 - Electrifying CalTrain;
 - Cleaning school bus emissions.
- Financial incentives and disincentives
Including, for example:
 - Exploring new vehicle fees and taxes (e.g., vehicle registration fee to be used for climate-friendly transportation);
 - Removing parking subsidies;

- Implementing a “feebate” program (rebates for fuel efficient vehicles supported by fees on less efficient vehicles);
 - Implementing an indirect-source development fee, similar to that being tried in the San Joaquin air basin, to pay for transportation improvements;
 - Raising parking meter rates and using the funding generated for climate protection;
 - Providing additional incentives for fleet turnover;
 - Pursuing environmentally preferable purchasing and contracting programs;
 - Developing a community-based system for trading energy or carbon credits;
 - Providing regional funding for local, NGO and small-business greenhouse-gas-reduction programs and projects;
 - Exploring new pricing strategies (e.g., road tolls, reduced transit fares).
- Regulation
Including, for example:
 - Increasing standards for stationary sources;
 - Requiring taxi fleets to phase in hybrid or other fuel-efficient vehicles;
 - Implementing energy efficient standards for building remodeling;
 - Setting regional green building standards so investors cannot choose jurisdictions with less stringent regulations;
 - Preventing refinery flaring;
 - Ending exemptions for trucks;
 - Expediting permit processes for green development;
 - Removing methane exemptions.
- Integration (incorporating climate considerations into existing programs and procedures)
Including, for example:
 - Making greenhouse-gas impact an important part of the CEQA process;
 - Tying MTC project funding to emissions impact;
 - Basing Proposition 1B funding on support for emission reduction.
- Public information
Including, for example:
 - Communicating the benefits of reduced or zero car ownership;
 - Connecting “Spare the Air Days” to the climate issue;
 - Designing and implementing a school curriculum;
 - Coordinating town hall meetings;
 - “Branding” climate change and creating a recognizable logo, similar to “Spare the Air;”
 - Publishing a climate change newsletter;
 - Exploiting community-access, public and commercial television opportunities;
 - Engaging youth in climate change and emission issues;
 - Implementing environmental considerations in new driver education programs;
 - Providing a forum for businesses and other affected entities to express opinions on climate- change policies and regulations;
 - Providing rebate and incentive information;

- Providing resources for community and employee education;
 - Providing information on how other environmental issues relate to climate change;
 - Educating parents on how their children may be affected by climate change;
 - Connecting builders and developers to the climate issue;
 - Involving churches;
 - Emphasizing personal responsibility and things individuals can do to reduce emissions;
 - Tailoring messages to reach the not-yet-converted;
 - Relating climate change to health;
 - Developing multiple messages and messengers.
- Environmental Stewardship
Including, for example:
 - Increasing composting and waste reduction;
 - Banning recyclables and green waste from landfills;
 - Decreasing water use;
 - Linking water conservation to “Spare the Air”;
 - Launching a “native plant” program to conserve water and reduce waste;
 - Encouraging local foods;
 - Modernizing storm water regulations.
- Environmental Equity
Including, for example:
 - Initiating climate justice projects and programs to reduce differential climate impact on disadvantage communities
 - Addressing equity issues in cap and trading programs for greenhouse gases.
- Leadership and Coordination
Including, for example:
 - Overseeing multiple efforts on multiple fronts;
 - Articulating clear and consistent goals, shared values and common priorities;
 - Partnering to reduce duplication and reinvention;
 - Providing strong links to state efforts;
 - Encouraging and supporting local, business and NGO efforts;
 - Developing a consolidated plan to cap emissions and attain climate-change objectives;
 - Advocating for legislation;
 - Supporting legal defenses of climate actions;
 - Helping to build political will.